



Flock

The Annual Gathering of Members of BirdLife South Africa

On the West Coast 2018

EXCURSION INFORMATION BOOKLET



Photo: Gisela Madden

NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO:

Please take note of the following if you are planning to attend any of the excursions listed in this booklet during Flock on the West Coast 2018:

- All listed excursions can be booked via the [online booking platform](#) located on the Flock on the West Coast 2018 [website](#).
- Bookings are subject to availability as spaces are limited.
- Bookings for the excursions will only be confirmed and spaces allocated upon receipt of **full** payment.
- No participants will be allowed to attend any of the excursions without signing and submitting an [indemnity form](#).
- Please ensure that you have read, understood and accepted the [Terms and Conditions](#) before booking for Flock on the West Coast 2018 and its associated excursions.
- Participants will be responsible for their own refreshments and stationary during the excursions and workshops.
- Weather on the West Coast and at sea can be changeable, so participants are encouraged to dress for potentially wet, cold and/or windy conditions.
- Participants are encouraged to wear a hat and sunscreen during all activities.

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If you have booked for any of the excursions please take note of the following:

Vouchers

1. The vouchers at the back of this pocket guide contain all the information you need for each excursion you have booked for, indicating the group you have been allocated to and the place of departure for each event.

Departure times for boat excursions

1. As we are wholly reliant on sea and weather conditions on the day, it is impossible to stipulate exact departure times at present. Departures times will be posted in the entrance hall of the conference venue and on the Flock on the West Coast 2018 and BirdLife South Africa Facebook Groups the evening prior to each excursion.
2. Although boat operators will do their utmost to depart at the stipulated time, the wind and swell might not cooperate, and guests are kindly requested to be patient and flexible.
3. Due to limited boats, the departure times of multiple groups have been staggered. Each participant has been assigned to a specific group; please consult your vouchers at the back of this booklet, where your assigned group has been indicated with a red dot.
4. **IMPORTANT:** Those guests who have booked the Pelagic or Dassen Island trips for **Tuesday morning, 6 March 2018**, will be emailed/sms'ed their departure times the evening prior to the event. Staff will also be on hand at the docks to register these guests, and to hand them their pocket guides.

Departure points

1. The departure points for the various excursions are summarised as follows:
 - a. Dassen Island: Yzerfontein Harbour (GPS: -33.346230, 18.148971);
 - b. Malgas Island: the marina at Club Mykonos;
 - c. Island Tour: the marina at Club Mykonos;
 - d. Pelagic: the marina at Club Mykonos;
 - e. Faansie Peacock walking tour: the parking lot of the Langebaan Country Estate clubhouse;
 - f. Groot Winterhoek Wilderness area: the parking lot opposite Athene Conference Centre.
2. **IMPORTANT:** Yzerfontein Harbour (the departure point for the excursion to Dassen Island) is situated about 56km from Club Mykonos resort. Guests who have booked for this excursion are advised to allow sufficient travel time.

What to bring

1. Weather on the West Coast can be unpredictable, so delegates are advised to pack accordingly.
2. Delegates participating in any of the excursions are advised to bring a hat and sunscreen.
3. Excursions requiring boat transfers might require some physical exertion. Please wear sturdy shoes and bring something wind and water proof for the journey.
4. Delegates are responsible for providing their own drinks and snacks during excursions.
5. The boat rides may get bumpy and guests who are prone to seasickness are advised to take precautionary medication.
6. Boat rides may get wet so please bring water proof gear for your cameras and other electronic equipment.

PELAGIC BOAT TRIPS

If Flock at Sea gave you a taste for pelagic birding then this is an excursion not to be missed! The boat will leave from the marina at Club Mykonos, heading out via Vondeling Island (known for its large colony of Cape Fur Seals) to the trawling grounds off the Saldanha Bay coast. Participants will be placed right in the heart of the clouds of seabirds that can be found around the back ends of the ocean trawlers. Species targeted will include Black-browed and Shy Albatross, Sooty and Great Shearwater, White-chinned and Northern Giant Petrel, and Wilson's Storm Petrel. Who knows what else could turn up! Please dress warmly and make sure to wear water- and windproof outer layers. Make sure to take your seasickness tablets!

Price per person per trip: R 1600



DASSEN ISLAND

Departing from Yzerfontein Harbour, guests will be transported to Dassen Island in 12-seater Zodiacs (rubber-ducks) where they will be allowed to disembark and enjoy close-up encounters with the island's birds. Dassen Island is uninhabited by humans and is home to a colony of African Penguins, breeding populations of African Black Oystercatchers (BirdLife South Africa's Bird of the Year 2018), Great White Pelicans, as well as Cape and Crowned Cormorants. Please dress warmly for the boat ride out and make sure to have a water- and wind-proof outer layer. Participants are also advised that disembarkation onto the island's jetty can be tricky.

Price per person per trip: R 600



Logistics for Dassen Island

1. The boat ride to Dassen Island is fairly long. Please prepare yourself for bumpy, wet and windy conditions and dress accordingly.
2. Dassen Island is a nature reserve and plays host to a great number of breeding birds (especially African Penguins). Access is restricted to the main road, so please respect this at all times.
3. The road from the jetty to the lighthouse transects the island along a 2.3km route. Please wear good walking shoes and bring enough water to drink.
4. Although regulations at Dassen Island prohibits close-up views of the breeding birds, the views from the lighthouse are magnificent, with Table Mountain visible in the distance.



MALGAS ISLAND

Guests will travel by boat (Zodiacs) to Malgas Island from the Club Mykonos Marina, where they will be able to disembark on the island for approximately 40 minutes. This excursion will give participants a front row seat to watch and photograph the famous Cape Gannet colony which is home to approximately 20 000 breeding pairs (25% of the global population). Malgas is the Afrikaans name for a Cape Gannet and given the many individuals who breed there, it is certainly an appropriate name for the island. This trip is a must for photographers! Participants are also advised that disembarkation onto the island's jetty can be tricky.

Price per person per trip: R 600



Logistics for Malgas Island

1. The gannets and cormorants breeding at Malgas Island are obliging subjects for photography, and guests are encouraged to bring their cameras. However, guests are kindly requested to put the interests of the birds first, and to stay with their guide and within the stipulated areas at all times.
2. Disembarkation at Malgas Island is challenging, especially during heavy swells. A staircase is winched down to the level of the boat, and guests will be required to step from the boat onto the staircase while moving with the swell. Please wear shoes with a good grip.



SALDANHA BAY ISLAND TOUR

This three hour island tour on board a 25 pax catamaran will give guests a close-up view of the Saldanha Bay islands, including Malgas, Jutten and Schaapen Islands, which host almost 80 000 coastal seabirds. A guide will assist in pointing out the many cormorants and tern species which roost on these islands, as well as the Cape Gannets which breed on Malgas from the deck of the boat. Guests are asked to bring a wind proof outer layer. There will be a cash bar on board for those wanting to enjoy a beverage during their cruise.

Price per person per trip: R 600



Logistics for Island Tour

1. The island tour will take you on a leisurely cruise around Saldanha Bay harbour and, depending on sea conditions, should allow good views of Malgas, Schaapen and Jutten islands.
2. The catamaran does have a cash bar, but please bring your own food.



GROOT WINTERHOEK WILDERNESS AREA

The Western Cape is renowned for its unique flora and fauna. This excursion will be a full day outing which will target the mountain fynbos endemics, as well as some of the coastal plain specials. Guests will need to pack their own snacks, lunch and drinks for the day. Target birds will include Cape Rock-jumper, Orange-breasted Sunbird, Cape Siskin, Protea and White-throated Canary, Victorin's Warbler, Cape Clapper and Karoo Lark and Cape Sugarbird. This trip is a must for anyone who is looking to clean-up on Cape-based lifers.

Price per person per trip: R 750



Logistics for Groot Winterhoek Wilderness Area

1. This excursion is a long day out, so please bring sufficient food and drink.
2. The excursion will culminate in a visit to Groot Winterhoek Nature Reserve, and additional stops along the Dasklip Pass should allow for good Cape endemic birding.
3. The fynbos at the nature reserve is recovering from a major fire in 2017, so guests are encouraged to stay on the trails at all times. There will be a short walk into the nature reserve so please bring sturdy shoes and a hat.
4. Please note, there are no shops along the route or at the nature reserve's reception area, so please bring all your provisions with you.
5. The weather in this area is unpredictable, so please dress for any eventuality.



LOCAL BIRDING AROUND WEST COAST NATIONAL PARK

West Coast National Park (WCNP) is an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) and world renowned Ramsar site, encompassing the famous Langebaan Lagoon which is home to many wetland birds and migratory shorebirds, including Greater and Lesser Flamingo, Sanderling, Little Stint, Terek and Curlew Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Whimbrel and Grey Plover, to name but a few. The rest of the reserve is Strandveld fynbos with bird highlights such as Southern Black Korhaan, Cape Spurfowl, Southern Grey Tit and Black Harrier. At each of the Park's four hides an expert guide will be waiting with a scope to help identify the West Coast's notorious little grey jobs (shorebirds). Guests are welcome to self-drive at this time or meet with one of the local bird club volunteers or BirdLife staff members who will be leading small trips around Langebaan and surrounds.

This excursion is free of charge.



VELDDRIF SALT WORKS AND BERG RIVER ESTUARY

Situated 40km north of Langebaan, the Berg River Estuary and Cerebos Salt Works combine into a birding hotspot with specials including Chestnut-banded Plover, Cape Teal, South African Shelduck, Pied Avocet and many more wetland and wader species. This has been a reliable spot for Red-necked Phalarope over the past few years and on route birders can try their luck finding Cape Long-billed Lark, Southern Black Korhaan and Blue Crane. An expert guide will be stationed with a scope along the R27 which intersects the Cerebos Salt Works.

This excursion is free of charge.



Logistics for Local birding events at West Coast National Park and Velddrif

1. A number of birding experts (wearing brightly coloured caps) will be waiting to meet you at a select number of bird hides around West Coast National Park and at the Berg River Mouth near the Velddrif Salt Works during the course of Flock on the West Coast 2018. The main gate to the salt works are situated at (-32.800461, 18.183768). If this gate is closed, please use the gate at Kuifkop Visvanger (-32.81248, 18.19457).
2. **Please note**, these guides will only be on duty at the bird hides at certain times of the day. For more information on when these local birding events will take place, please consult the Excursion Schedule in your pocket guide.
3. These local birding events are free of charge, but delegates are responsible for their own travel arrangements and conservation fees.
4. In West Coast National Park guides will be available at Seeberg Bird Hide, Geelbek bird hides 1 and 2, Abrahamskraal Bird Hide and Tsaarsbank view point. During high tide guides will not be stationed in the Geelbek hides.
5. Guides will be equipped with a spotting scope to maximise viewing.
6. In most instances, the local birding events have been scheduled to take place during low tide in order to increase the birding opportunities, however, good birding can still be enjoyed during high tides at designated areas as stipulated in the excursion schedule.

FAANSIE PEACOCK'S WADER WORKSHOP & STRANDVELD WALKS

World famous author and artist, Faansie Peacock, will be offering a four hour workshop on 6 March 2018 at 13:00. Faansie will give attendees an in-depth course on wader biology, behaviour, ecology, identification and much more. Workshop participants will also be given priority booking to attend the walks around the Langebaan Country Estate, led by Faansie, in search of the local endemic lark species, such as Cape Long-billed Lark and other strandveld birds such as Sickle-winged Chat and Southern Black Korhaan.

Workshop price per person: R 450; Strandveld walks: no charge.



BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY SEMINAR & PRACTICAL SESSION ON MALGAS ISLAND WITH ALBERT FRONEMAN

Acclaimed bird photographer Albert Froneman will present a hands-on seminar to teach you all you need to know to head out and achieve success with photographing birds. The seminar will cover a range of topics but will ultimately aim to prepare participants for the practical bird photography session on Malgas Island.

- Digital photography concepts relevant to bird photography
- Camera and lens choices
- Settings for success
- Photographing birds in flight
- Field techniques
- Tips and tricks

The seminar will take place at 13:30 on 9 March in the Club Mykonos Conference Venue rooms 1&2. This will be paired with a dedicated field excursion / bird photography practical on the morning of Saturday 10 March with Albert to Malgas Island. The practical session will be aimed at learning in field how to capture some unique images of the Cape Gannets and other birds that frequent the island.

Spaces are limited so book now to avoid disappointment!

Please note the seminar and excursion will only take place if a minimum of 20 bookings are confirmed.

Cost: R1450 per person (includes seminar and excursion)



All images above taken by Albert Froneman

Logistics for Malgas Island Photographic Excursion

1. The gannets and cormorants breeding at Malgas Island are obliging subjects for photography, and guests are encouraged to bring their cameras. However, guests are kindly requested to put the interests of the birds first, and to stay with their guide and within the stipulated areas at all times.
2. Disembarkation at Malgas Island is challenging, especially during heavy swells. A staircase is winched down to the level of the boat, and guests will be required to step from the boat onto the staircase while moving with the swell. Please wear shoes with a good grip.

FOR MORE INFO PLEASE CONTACT:

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All photographs unless otherwise indicated were taken by Melissa Whitecross.